

1 Kings 11-12 - Backsliding, Pride and Man-made Religion

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1 Kings chapter 11. And getting right into this chapter in 11. Verse 1, it says,

"Now King Solomon loved many foreign women, along with the daughter of Pharaoh: (And those women included) Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women, ²from the nations concerning which the LORD had said to the people of Israel, "You shall not enter into marriage with them, neither shall they with you, (Why God? Are you a racist? No, not at all. Here's the reason.) for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods." (And it goes on to tell us here at the end of this verse.) Solomon clung to these in love." (ESV)

I want you to notice the emphasis on a couple of things here. First of all, it says, surely, *"surely they will turn away your heart..."* There is no maybe related to this particular Word from the Lord. This is not a, it might happen that way. Surely, it says they will turn away your heart. And yet despite the strength of those words which Solomon knew very well, it says that he *"clung to these in love."*

And I want to take a moment to look at that sentence right there. *"Solomon clung to"* his wives in love. There's a lot in that statement. Because when it says that when he clung to them in love, we know that it doesn't refer to loving the Lord. His love... And the reason that he clung to these women was a love for them.

And secondly, it was not a love for them that was even proper. It wasn't a love for their wellbeing. I mean, if Solomon being the wisest of all the men on the earth, knew that the gods that they worshiped were false. And if he really loved them and cared about their well-being, he would have done something about it. He wouldn't have played along with their whole paganistic worship practices. And helped them along those lines.

He would have done something being the wisest man, wouldn't you? And he's the king! He's the man who can do something about this sort of a thing. Solomon knew that YAHWEH was and is the One true God. He knew that. He

knew that all those other idols were nothing. And yet he perpetuated their false beliefs. And by so doing, he really wasn't showing love for these women.

But it says he clung to them in love and I believe it was really a love of love. And that may sound like a strange sort of a thing. But there's an incredibly powerful set of emotions that goes along with the whole idea of what it means to feel love. And the pleasure that goes along with both showing and receiving affection.

And those things are very pleasurable, and I believe that Solomon just got caught up in all of that, in such a way that the pleasure of those emotions with his many wives was something he just couldn't let go of. And he began to serve that, instead of truly serving the Lord. And the rest is history, as they say.

Even though there was a clear mandate from the Lord to stay far away from women of foreign descent. Because of the fact that they would drag him away. Solomon chose to reject that wisdom - the wisdom of that word and the obedience that goes along with it. And he chose instead to run after the emotional pleasure that these women brought into his life.

There there's one other thing that Solomon rejected in this that is probably worth mentioning as well. And that is the spiritual headship that every believing husband is ordained to have in the home.

One of the things I like to say to men, either when I'm doing their wedding or helping them prepare for their wedding. Is that on your wedding day, it's not just the day that you enter into a covenant with this woman. It is a day that you receive an ordination and a calling from the Lord to be the leader of your home. And to walk in that role of headship within the home - spiritual leadership within the home. But that's not something that happened here.

Paul actually talks about this. Let me show you a passage from Ephesians chapter 5. He writes and he says,

Ephesians 5:23-24 (ESV)

For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church, (or just like Christ is the head of the church,) his body and is himself its Savior.

Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

Why? Because he's ordained to that role of headship, that role of leadership. That's why when a woman is responding to the headship of her husband, she's responding to the work of Jesus Christ in his life to ordain him to that place. It's not necessarily a response to him personally.

Some women struggle with that. And they'll say, well, I just really have a hard time responding to his position of headship... and so forth. And I'll say, well, why? Well, because of him. Well, that's not why, it's not why you respond to that position of headship. It's the person who put him there. You're responding to Jesus. He ordained your husband to that role of headship.

And I know, I don't know why and neither do you necessarily from the standpoint that sometimes we men we feel pretty ill equipped to function in that role. But what is supposed to happen within the context of a biblical marriage is that the man is supposed to, as the head, rise up and take that role of spiritual leadership. And exercise that role of spiritual leadership in such a way that he provides for and protects the woman in his life on a spiritual level.

But that's not what we're seeing going on here. What we see is actually Solomon submitting to his wives. And of course, the whole plurality of wives is a problem in and of itself and we know that. But the point is this whole thing is backwards. And Solomon is submitting to them and their desires as it relates to their devotion to their pagan gods.

It's interesting, whenever believers choose to do what Solomon did, and that is to disregard the very clear warnings of God's Word, it is always a dangerous situation. And frankly, one of the things that God warned about marriage in both the Old and the New Testaments is this whole issue of being unequally yoked with an unbeliever. Obviously the passage right here talks about it. There's many other places in the Old Testament where it does as well.

And you guys probably all know about the place where it's discussed in the New Testament. I'll put it up on the screen for you anyway, from 2 Corinthians chapter 6, Paul writes,

2 Corinthians 6:14 (ESV)

Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?

Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?

And the danger today is the same danger that it was back in the days of Solomon. Because unbelievers will draw us to worship their gods. Somebody might say to me, well, pastor Paul, you don't understand. My boyfriend he's not religious. He doesn't worship any gods. Oh yes, he does. Oh yes, he does.

He may not go to church. He may not read a Bible. But he worships something or someone. We are ordained - created by God to worship. And we will worship something. And if it's not the One True God, we'll worship something else. Something else will take that place, of that role, of importance in our lives. We will all worship something. And his worship will corrupt yours.

Let's keep reading. Verse 3. This is crazy. It says, "*He had 700 wives, who were princesses, (meaning of noble birth) and 300 concubines.*" A concubine is akin to a legal mistress. And it says here at the end of verse 3, something that isn't any big newsflash to any of us. It says, "*...his wives turned away his heart.*" That's exactly what God said would happen.

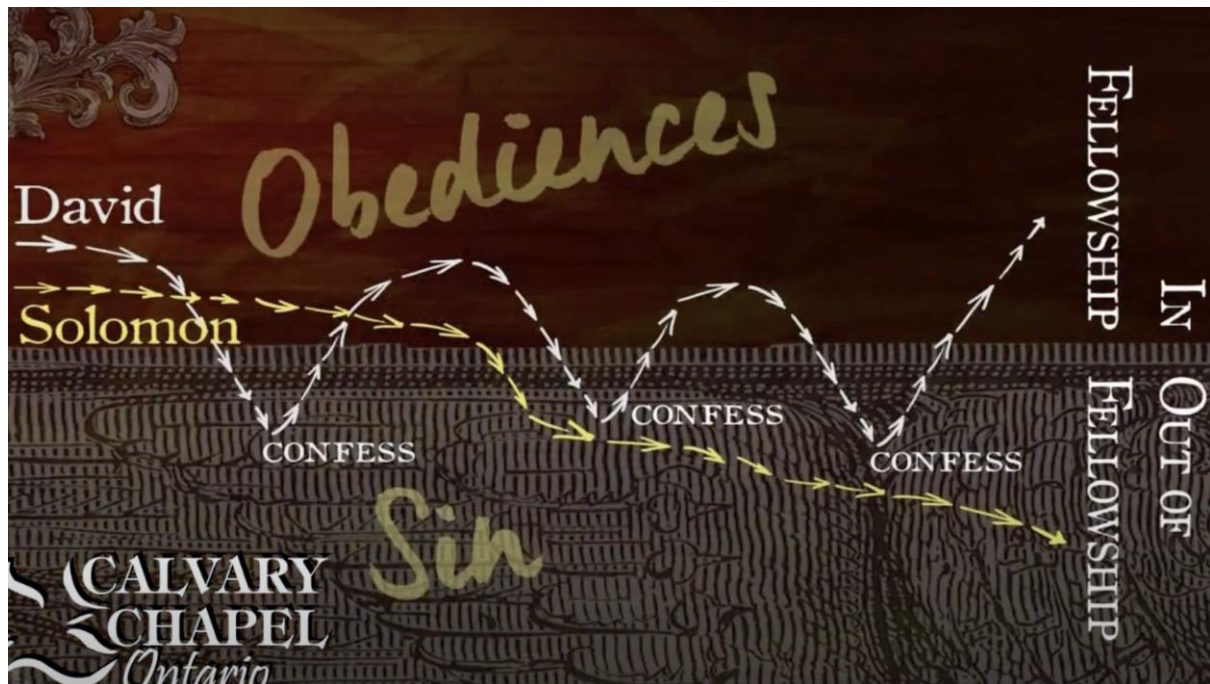
Of course, the chances of it happening were even, exponentially turned up because of just the sheer number of women in Solomon's life - a thousand of them. How many of them were foreign women who worshiped pagan idols? We don't know exactly. I'm sure it wasn't the entire number. I'm sure of this number of women, there were a great many of them that were Israelite ladies. But there were enough of the women that they drew his heart away.

It says in verse 4, "*For when Solomon was old his wives turned away his heart after other gods, and his heart was not wholly true to the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father.*"

Now, you read that verse right there, and it almost makes you think that David was a guy who didn't make these kinds of mistakes. And Solomon was a man who gave into it big time. But we know better. We've been through 1 and 2 Samuel. And we know that David was a man who actually made a lot of mistakes. In fact, some of these same sins of passion that Solomon has entered into, are things that David got involved with. And it greatly hindered his walk with the Lord.

It invited a great deal of violence into his home, and division, and heartache, and stuff. Why is it that this verse says that Solomon's heart wasn't devoted to the Lord, like his father David's was? Why does it say that when we know that

David sinned big time! I Mean some really notorious big time sin stuff. Let me show you a picture, maybe this will help illustrate it for you.



Here's a picture where it's divided across the center here and on the top. You've got obediences and on the bottom you've got sin. Then you've got David and Solomon. And it shows the course of their lives. Several times within the course of David's life, he dipped down into that area of sin and disobedience. But guess what? He always confessed his sin and returned to the Lord.

Now, you'll notice on the far right, it's written up and down there. But when somebody's in sin, we know that their life... It's just... It's natural. You're out of fellowship with the Lord. When you're involved in an area of sin, which is unconfessed, that breaks fellowship. When you confess your sin, and you get it back right with the Lord, you enter back into fellowship.

Notice David's life. Yeah, little bit of a rollercoaster ride. But we talked about that on Sunday. I even shared the fact that if you could see my Christian walk, on a graph, it would look like a rollercoaster ride. And that's about what David's did. But that's life. We confess our sin, and we get it right, and we come back into fellowship with the Lord.

Solomon didn't do that. We have no record of Solomon ever confessing his sin before God. And there was just this steady progression of his life where he started off good but he began to go down until the older he got, the worse he

got. And it tells us here that in his old age that he completely, he walked away from the Lord.

That's one of the... When you look at these passages that talk about how David was a man after God's own heart. And he was a man who walked with the Lord. Don't think for a moment that means that David was a perfect paragon of virtue. Or the perfect example of what it means to never sin and always walk with God. Not at all. He was a man who confessed his sin. That's what set him apart.

When the enemy comes to you and starts hammering you about the mistakes you make, just remember what God thinks is important. It's a life that responds to conviction. Okay? It's a life that responds to conviction. Not a life that is perfectly lived. That's not going to happen this side of glory. Now, that doesn't give us license to go out and just live the way we want. It's just reality.

Listen, as Christians, we know that it grieves the heart of our God when we walk in just open rebellion. We know that. And it ought to grieve our hearts, too. And there's a sorrow that comes over us when those kinds of mistakes are made.

But we also know that there is redemption, there's restoration. And we know and understand that if we confess our sins, He's faithful, and just, and will forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (John 1:9) And restore us in fellowship so that we can walk with Him again. And start again. The mercies of God are new every morning. (Lamentations 3:22-23) Isn't that wonderful news? The mercies of God are new every morning.

It goes on outlining the specifics. *"5 ...Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, (Ashtoreth was the goddess of fertility. The statues of Ashtoreth would have just about curled your hair. She was considered to be the spouse of Baal. Or Baal, as some pronounce his name. And there were all kinds of sexual immorality that went along with the worship of Ashtoreth.) and after Milcom (Milcom was) the abomination of the Ammonites (the god of the underworld.)*

6 Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the LORD and did not wholly follow the LORD, as David his father had done. (And) 7 Then Solomon built a high place (to) Chemosh the abomination of Moab, and for Molech the abomination of the Ammonites, on the mountain east of Jerusalem." By the way, it was to Molech that they would at times sacrifice their children in the fire.

And it says in verse 8. *"And so he did for all his foreign wives,"* However many of them were of foreign birth who came with some pagan baggage. Solomon accommodated them and not only built altars and temples for their pagan gods, but he participated in them himself. And so he did for all these foreign wives, *"who made offerings and sacrifice to their gods."*

9 And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice 10 and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods. But he did not keep what the LORD commanded. 11 Therefore the LORD said to Solomon, "Since this has been your practice and you have not kept my covenant and my statutes that I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom from you and will give it to your servant. 12 Yet for the sake of David your father I will not do it in your days, but I will tear it out of the hand of your son.

13 However, I will not tear away all the kingdom, but I will give one tribe to your son, for the sake of David my servant and for the sake of Jerusalem that I have chosen."

14 And the LORD raised up an adversary against Solomon, Hadad the Edomite. He was of the royal house in Edom." And then it kind of gives us kind of the back story of why this Hadad had such a problem with the Jews. And it says. "15 For when David was in Edom, and Joab the commander of the army went up to bury the slain, he struck down every male in Edom 15 (for Joab and all Israel remained there six months, until he had cut off every male in Edom). 17 But Hadad fled to Egypt, together with certain Edomites of his father's servants, Hadad still being (just) a little child. (at the time. And) 18 They set out from Midian and came to Paran and took men with them from Paran and came to Egypt, to Pharaoh king of Egypt, who gave him a house and assigned him an allowance of food and gave him land.

19 And Hadad found great favor in the sight of Pharaoh, so that he gave him in marriage the sister of his own wife, the sister of Tahpenes the queen. 20 And the sister of Tahpenes bore him Genubath his son, whom Tahpenes weaned in Pharaoh's house. And Genubath was in Pharaoh's house among the sons of Pharaoh. 21 But when Hadad heard in Egypt that David slept with his fathers and that Joab the commander of the army was dead, Hadad said to Pharaoh, "Let me depart that I may go to my own country." 22 But Pharaoh said to him, "What have you lacked with me that you are now seeking to go to your own country?" And he said to him, "Only let me depart." (Interesting conversation.)

23 God also raised up as an adversary to him, Rezon the son of Eliada, who had fled from his master Hadadezer king of Zobah. 24 And he gathered men about him and became leader of a marauding band, after the killing by David. And they went to Damascus and lived there and made him king in Damascus. (And it says) 25 He was an adversary of Israel all the days of Solomon, doing harm as Hadad did. And he loathed Israel. (He hated Israel and anything to do with it.) and he reigned over Syria."

Here's the question: Why did God raise up these enemies against Solomon? Well, we know the main reason was Solomon walked in disobedience toward the Lord, and didn't keep the covenant. But there's more than that. When hardship comes because of that, that's also the mercy of God. What I mean by that is, it is God's mercy to allow the difficulties of life. To chastise us so that we might repent and get back right with God.

Think about God's right to do with Solomon as He wished. I'm a little blown away by His mercy to be honest with you. You would think that, I mean, after even giving his children up for sacrifice. And building all these temples. And helping his wives worship all these pagan gods. You would think that, why didn't God just drop him where he stood? Some of us might be thinking, yeah, if I was God, that's what I would have done. I just would have dropped him. It's like, hey, buddy, your time ran out. Boom. Happened to some other people.

But not only did it not happen to Solomon like that, he didn't just drop dead. The Bible says that God brought a prophet against him to basically tell him, I'm going to rip the kingdom out of your hand. But actually it's not even going to happen in your lifetime. It's going to happen. But you won't see it. It'll happen in your son's lifetime." That's mercy.

And then on top of that, God allows these enemies to be raised up in this interim period of time, who are this constant reminder to Solomon that, you've strayed from your relationship to the Lord. Get right! Repent! Get these things taken care of. God is pouring out His mercy on Solomon. Just amazing.

There was somebody else, too, that was a problem for Solomon. And his name, verse 26, was "*Jeroboam the son of Nebat, (He was) an Ephraimite (or, if you will, of the tribe of Ephraim.) of Zeredah, a servant of Solomon, whose mother's name was Zeruah, a widow, (And he) also lifted up his hand against the king.*" The term "lifted up his hand" means to act rebelliously. And then it's going to give us some of the backstory now on that. "*27 And this was the reason why he lifted up his hand against the king. Solomon built the Millo, (And a Millo again, is kind of like a supporting terrace around a city for security purposes.) and (he)*

closed up the breach of the city of David his father. 28 The man Jeroboam was very able, and when Solomon saw that the young man was industrious he gave him charge over all the forced labor of the house of Joseph. (meaning the northern tribes.) 29 And at that time, when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite found him on the road. Now Ahijah had dressed himself in a new garment, and the two of them were alone in the open country.

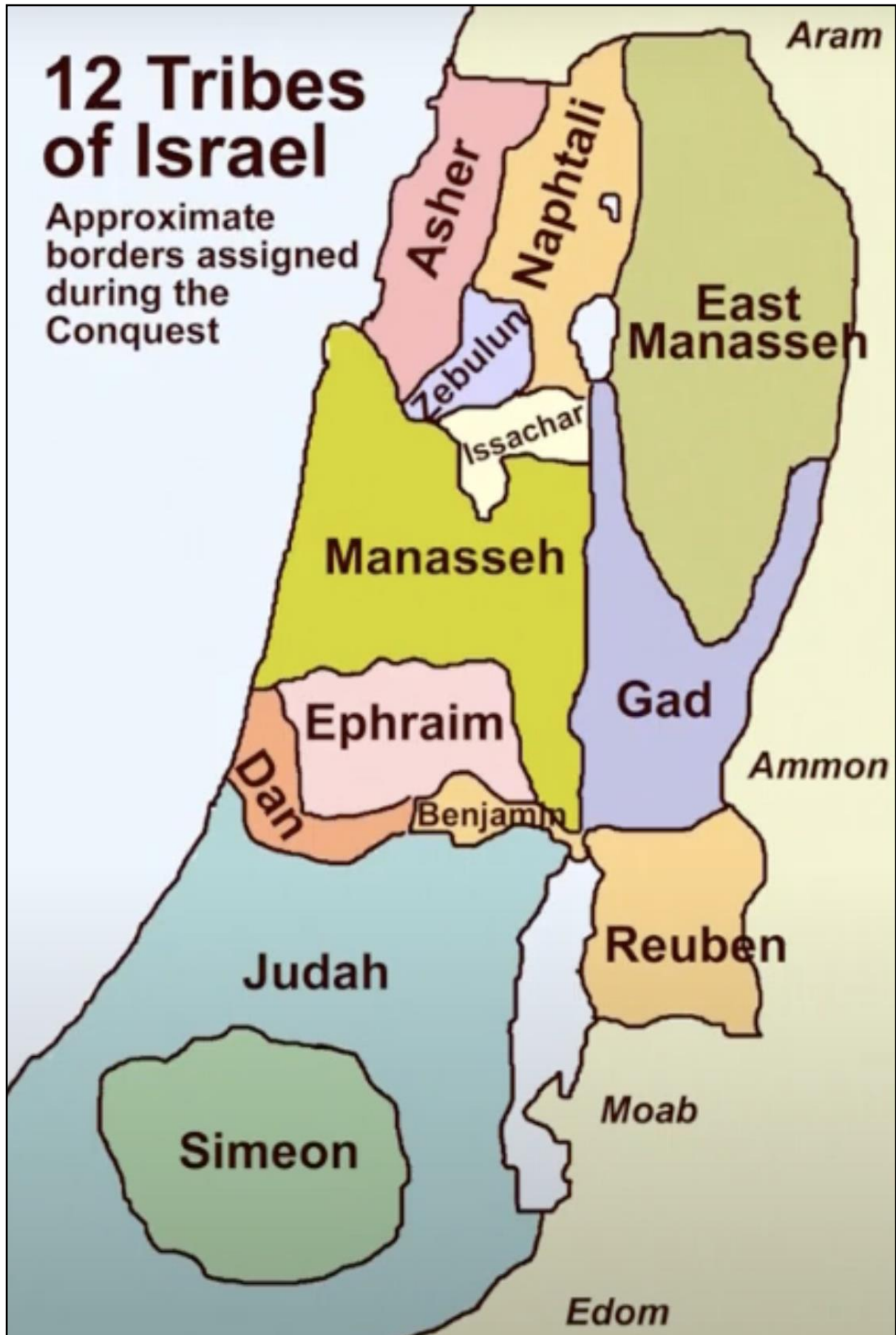
30 Then Ahijah laid hold of the new garment that was on him, and tore it into twelve pieces. 31 And he said to Jeroboam, "Take for yourself ten pieces, for thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Behold, I am about to tear the kingdom from the hand of Solomon and will give you ten tribes (Okay. He's going to go on here. And he says in verse 32, "32 (but he shall have one tribe, for the sake of my servant David and for the sake of Jerusalem, the city that I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel)," And he's going to explain why to this guy in just a moment.

But for those of you that are able to do elementary math, which is just about as far as my math skills go. You might notice that it says that this prophet comes along to Jeroboam, takes off his new garment, and instantly begins to tear it up. And he rips it up into 12 pieces. And he says to Jeroboam, here, take 10 of them. And here's what this means God is going to give you 10 tribes of Israel. But He's going to retain one tribe for the house of David.

I'm not that smart. But I know that comes to 11. And there are 12 tribes. And he ripped up his garment into 12 pieces. Where is the one missing tribe? Well, if you look at a map of the distribution of the land, which I'll show you here, you'll notice that in the lower area of Judah, the tribe of Simeon is actually encompassed around about by the area known as Judah.

12 Tribes of Israel

Approximate borders assigned during the Conquest



Now those two tribal areas would later on be referred to as Judea, in the time of Christ, of course. But at this time, Judah and Simeon were essentially living as one tribe. And the northern 10 tribes would be commanded, if you will, ruled, by this Jeroboam. And the southern two tribes, which he refers to here just as one. Because it's just the area of Judah, would belong to the house of David. All right.

Verse 33 is where Ahijah explains to Jeroboam why all this is happening. And this is important, *"because they have forsaken me and worshiped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, Chemosh the god of Moab, and Milcom the god of the Ammonites, and they have not walked in my ways, doing what is right in my sight and keeping my statutes and my rules, as David his father did."*

Now, Jeroboam was just told something very important. You're going to receive 10 tribes. 10 of them are going to be taken away from the house of David, given to you. You're going to rule over them. Here's why. They haven't been faithful to me. Now, what does that... What should that say to Jeroboam? Well, I better be faithful then or God will probably do the same thing. Right? I mean, he explained the whole thing. But that's not what's going to happen.

Verse 34, *"Nevertheless, I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand, but I will make him ruler all the days of his life, for the sake of David my servant whom I chose, who kept my commandments and my statutes. 35 But I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand and will give it to you, ten tribes. 36 Yet to his son I will give one tribe, that David my servant may always have a lamp before me in Jerusalem, the city where I have chosen to put my name. 37 And I will take you, and you shall reign over all that your soul desires, and you shall be king over Israel. 38 And if you will listen to all that I command you, and will walk in my ways, and do what is right in my eyes by keeping my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did, (look at this) I will be with you and will build you a sure house, as I built for David, and I will give Israel to you. 39 And I will afflict the offspring of David because of this, but not forever."*

Do you guys see what God is offering this man? And this is amazing. This is really very similar to the offer that He gave to David. Because David, you'll remember, followed up a bad king. That king was Saul. David came along and he ruled in the place of Saul. And he changed things for the better. Saul had become extremely corrupt.

Well, now there's corruption again in the kingdom. And now God comes to this man named Jeroboam and he says, listen, I will bless you. I will give you an

enduring kingdom. You'll have a kingdom like David if you'll just obey Me. And that's what I'll do for you."

Well, Solomon got word of all this going on. The king has ways of figuring these things out. And in verse 40 we're told that *"Solomon sought therefore to kill Jeroboam.* (That's why Jeroboam's hand was lifted up against Solomon. Because he tried to kill him.) *But Jeroboam arose and (he) fled into Egypt, to Shishak king of Egypt, and was in Egypt until the death of Solomon.*

41 Now the rest of the acts of Solomon, and all that he did, and his wisdom, are they not written in the Book of the Acts of Solomon? 42 And the time that Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel was forty years. 43 And Solomon slept with his fathers and was buried in the city of David his father. And Rehoboam his son reigned in his place."

Now, stop there. Well, we're at the end of the chapter. But let me just make a comment here. Twice now you have seen in this chapter the phrase, he *"slept with his fathers."* And of course that's a euphemism for, he died. It's pretty simple. That's the way they would describe it. It was a biblical term that was used to describe the death of the body. You with me? The death of the body. And I suppose the reason is because a dead body tends to appear as if it's sleeping. It's pretty simple, actually. But that's why the term was used.

It should not be confused with the unbiblical idea that our souls fall asleep when we die. Listen, your soul cannot sleep, and it will not die. Your soul is going to live on, whether you want it to or not. And it will either live in the presence of God or not, depending on what you choose. But your soul is not going to die, nor is your soul going to sleep.

There is a particular doctrine that has plagued the church over the years. It is also embraced by some cult groups called the, doctrine of soul sleep. And it's the idea that, when we die our bodies, of course, cease to function. And our souls go into a posture of slumber until they are awakened by the Lord at His coming or something of that nature. Depending on the group that happens to hold that particular belief. Well, the apostle Paul made it very clear that's not the case when he said that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. (2 Corinthians 5:8)

Jesus actually told parables about... Or not parables, excuse me. A parable is actually a story that is a reflection. He actually told a genuine account of two men who died. And how they were conscious after death. One being conscious of the fact that he was in the place of suffering. And the other who was

conscious of the fact that he was in the place of comfort. Because one had died in faith and the other not.

Plus we have the transfiguration of Jesus on the mountaintop where suddenly Jesus is talking with Moses and Elijah. (Matthew 17:3) They're not asleep. They're awake. They're talking. And they're aware. It says they were discussing with Jesus, His final trip to Jerusalem when He would be betrayed into the hands of the Gentiles. And they were talking about it. They were just, hey, You ready for this? This is the big one. It's going down sort of a thing.

I don't know what they were saying exactly. But they're talking about it. They're aware of what's going on. They're not sleeping. It's... There is no reference in the Bible specifically to the soul sleeping. Just remember whenever sleep is used as a euphemism for death, it always refers to the body.

Christians get this really messed up. And that's one of the reasons why they struggle with the teachings regarding the resurrection. Because Paul says in Thessalonians, he says that, when the Lord returns, he said, we will not precede those who have gone before us who died before. It says, they will be raised first and then we will be transformed we who are left on the earth at the time of the Lord's coming. (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17)

And some people go, oh, those people are going to be raised when Christ returns. Well, that must mean then that they were asleep and then they're going to be raised." No, he's just saying their bodies are going to be raised. Their spirit right now is in the presence of the Lord.

As Paul said, "*Absent from the body, present with the LORD.*" (2 Corinthians 5:8) But when the Lord returns, their new bodies are going to be given them. That's what it's saying. It doesn't mean that they're going to kind of wake up and go, hey, wow, cool. Is it time to get up? That's not consistent with the Scripture and the doctrine of soul sleep is not a biblical doctrine. Just so you know that.

By the way, this is another interesting side note. But it is believed by many that the Book of Ecclesiastes was actually written by Solomon, toward the end of his life. And I suppose one of the reasons for that is because if you've read through the Book of Ecclesiastes lately, which interestingly enough, I just did in my own Bible reading time. Interesting book.

But it is life as he refers to it as "*under the sun,*" which is again, a euphemism for: apart from God, a part from the perspective of God, apart from the wisdom of God, apart from a relationship with God. I mean, if you've read through

Ecclesiastes, Solomon will say things like, yeah, who knows whether our spirit goes up or down? And he'll say, and our end is just like the animals. I mean, they die, we die. Who's to say where their spirit goes? What's he saying? He's talking about life separated from God.

By this time, it's believed that he was so out of relationship with God as he had tried to apply his wisdom to life here on earth and try to make sense of it. He basically concluded, as you know, by saying, there is no way to make sense of it at all. It's vanity. And called it "*Vanity of vanities.*" (Ecclesiastes 1:2)

He said, it's the only thing I can think of is that, just enjoy your life in this meager, measly, meaningless life that you're living. Just try to enjoy it. Just try to enjoy what you do. Good luck with that. But that's about the best you can hope for.

I mean, if that isn't a worldly perspective, I don't know what is. I mean, that's how your unbelieving neighbors are living. Right? There's no meaning for life other than just enjoy it. Get as much joy out of it, as much pleasure out of it as you can possibly wring out of it. Because guess what? When it's over. And who knows where you go? Who knows whether your spirit rises, or goes down, or anything like that. Because we don't know. God isn't telling." It's kind of that whole perspective of just trying to make sense of life apart from God.

And let me tell you something, it's oppressive. Seriously oppressive. I mean, good grief. I'm...Yeah. Honestly, I think there's not a whole lot of reason to live apart from the Lord. I mean, and the only reason people do live is for just what they can get out of it. It's looking for a little happiness. I mean, that's what you hear, right? On TV all the time, you just got to make yourself happy. Just be happy. As long as you're happy.

And that's one of the reasons why our culture can pass laws about things that were otherwise known as sin. Are you going to look somebody in the eye who lives only a few short years on this planet and tell them they can't be happy doing what they want to do? Are you going to be the one to tell them that? They don't want to do it. They can't bring themselves to do it. That's just too depressing.

I'm not going to tell them they can't do that. We're going to make it legal. Boom, done. Go live your desires because this is all you get. It's all you get. There's nothing else after this. Just oblivion; when you're dead you are dead. What a horrible way to live. What a horrible way to live.

Chapter 12. Well, it says, then *"Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all Israel had come to Shechem to make him king. 2 And as soon as Jeroboam the son of Nebat heard of it, (actually) he was still in Egypt, (we're told) where he had fled from King Solomon), (But he heard, hey, everybody came to Shechem to make you king.) then Jeroboam returned from Egypt.*

3 And they sent and called him, and Jeroboam and all the assembly of Israel came and said to Rehoboam, 4 "Your father made our yoke heavy. Now therefore lighten the hard service of your father and his heavy yoke on us, and we will serve you. (And) 5 He said to them, "Go away for three days, (and) then come again to me." So the people went away."

Remember, Rehoboam is the son of Solomon. He's now king. Jeroboam is back in the land. But it says here that he comes back when he hears Solomon is dead. And he comes with this group of people to talk to Rehoboam, the king.

And Solomon had been involved in so many building projects, he had taxed the people very heavily. And they were reeling from the tax - the taxation. And the labor force that was required of the people to do all these incredible things that Solomon had done.

And the people came to Rehoboam, Solomon's son, and they said, hey, would you lift the tax burden a little bit? We just need a little reprieve from this. This has been going on for years. I mean, years and years. Just lighten our load a little bit. It's like today, us going to our politicians and saying, could you lessen our taxes? And Rehoboam basically, responded by saying give me 3 days to think about it.

And "6 Then King Rehoboam took counsel with the old men, who had stood before his father Solomon while he was yet alive, saying, (Well, what do you think, guys?) "How would you advise me to answer this people?" 7 And they said to him, (listen up) "If you will (actually) be a servant to this people (and if you really, truly look at yourself as someone who is called to) serve them (and you speak kindly to them,) speak good words ...when you answer them, ...they will serve you for life. They will serve you forever."

That's good counsel. *"8 But (it says) he abandoned the counsel that the old men gave him and took counsel with the young men who had grown up with him and stood before him."* And by the way, Rehoboam wasn't necessarily a young man at this time. He was 40 years old. Don't think of a teenager. Now he didn't have the wisdom ultimately that his father possessed. He didn't have the age and the experience. But he wasn't just a lad either.

And he goes to these guys. "9 ...he said to them, "What do you guys think? These people told me the *"Lighten the yoke that your father's put on us."* 10 *And the young men who had grown up with him said to him, (All right, here's what we'll tell you. Here's what we'd say.) "Thus shall you speak to this people who said to you, "Your father made our yoke heavy,... you (want to) lighten it..."* I'll tell you, you don't even know what a heavy yoke is. Just stick around here.

"My little finger is thicker than my father's thighs. 11 And (then) now, whereas my father laid on you a heavy yoke, (I'm going to add to it. That's what they told him to say.) "My father disciplined you with whips," I'm going to do it with scorpions." What kind of advisors do they sound like to you? (Congregation provides a comment and pastor Paul agrees.) Yeah, me too.

"12 So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam (on) the third day, as the king said, when he said, "Come to me again (on) the third day." 13 And the king answered the people harshly, and forsaking the counsel... (of the) older men, (obviously they were the wiser ones, that they) had given him, (and) 14 he spoke to them according to the counsel of the young men, saying, "My father made your yoke heavy, I'm going to add to your yoke. (And) My father disciplined you with whips, and I'm going to discipline you with scorpions." 15 So the king did not listen to the people, for it was a turn of affairs brought about by the LORD that he might fulfill his word, which the LORD spoke by Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

16 And when all Israel saw that the king did not listen to them, the people answered the king, "What portion do we have in David? We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse. To your tents, O Israel! Look now to your own house, David." So Israel went to their tents."

And that is, again, a phrase to describe the fact that they are they are basically seceding from the nation of Israel. They're saying, "You know what? You're out for yourself. We're going to be out for our self. That's all there is to it. You want... You're going to be selfish, self-centered, and this is... You're going to try to be heavy handed. Well, we're going to take away anything that you might have otherwise have to be heavy handed about. We're taking ourselves away from your reign. And it says, *"Israel went to their tents,"* meaning, that they withdrew.

"17 But Rehoboam reigned over the people of Israel who lived in the cities of Judah. 18 Then King Rehoboam sent Adoram, who is the taskmaster over the forced labor,..."

This is how dumb this guy is. He has already gone through this pulling away of the people. And then he sends his taskmaster. All right, you go to these people and take your whip with you. And you bring them back here and tell them you're serving me. And the guy's, I don't know, he's dumb enough to say, okay.

And it says he goes to do this, "*and (it says that) all Israel stoned him to death with stones. And King Rehoboam hurried to mount his chariot to flee to Jerusalem.*" Apparently, he was not that far away and he could actually see it happening.

And verse 19, "*So Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David to this day.*" Stop there for a moment, please. This is where we begin now, what we call the "divided kingdom." And this continues on forever, essentially.

Now, you're told here that Jeroboam got 10 tribes. And essentially, Rehoboam got one. Which we know also involves the tribe of Simeon. You would think, wouldn't you, well, Jeroboam got the good part. He got 10! Ten! A lot of land; a lot of people. He got the big... That should be the lasting dynasty, shouldn't it?

It's the nation of Israel. It's the northern area of Israel that is going to go into captivity first. Because as we read in this chapter further, Jeroboam, instead of being obedient to God, instead of being devoted to keeping the Word of God, he draws the people further into paganism. And after several generations - and God gave them plenty of time to repent - God is going to bring the Assyrian army against the northern tribes of Israel, take them captive, wipe them out, just haul them off somewhere.

And those... And the people that remain in the land, the Jews that remain in the land, because they - the Assyrians - would leave just a few people there. But they also populated other people that they had conquered in that same land. The northern area of Israel and the capital of that northern area was Samaria, it's going to be eventually called the land of Samaria.

By the time Jesus comes around for His public ministry, there is no nation of Israel north of the borders, essentially of Judah. Up above that is Samaria. And the only people who lived there were half breeds. Jews who had married with other pagan peoples over the years. And who had really lost their Jewishness. Doesn't mean God didn't love them anymore.

The Jews wouldn't set foot on their land. Jesus did. You'll remember it was at the well outside of a Samaritan town that he talked with a Samaritan woman, shared that He was the Messiah. In fact, He had quite a reception in that

Samaritan village by the people who received Him. And He stayed there for a couple of days, just ministering to them and so forth. (John 4:1-43)

But these are half breeds. These are people who used to be Jews and they're really not anymore. And they've just mingled the worship of God with the worship of pagans.

Now the southern tribe of Judah lasted a little longer than the northern tribe of Israel. But they, too, eventually were conquered by the Babylonian Empire. And you guys probably remember that too. But this is that split.

Verse 20 it says, *"And when all Israel heard that Jeroboam had returned, they sent and called him to the assembly and made him king over all Israel. (And) There was none that followed the house of David but the tribe of Judah only. (Which again, encompasses Simeon.)"*

21 When Rehoboam came to Jerusalem, he assembled all the house of Judah and the tribe of Benjamin, (which I don't think he held on to for very long.) 180,000 chosen warriors, to fight against the house of Israel,..."

Now he can't bring these people into subjection. They won't follow his lead. They won't be conquered by a taskmaster. They killed the taskmaster. Now what's Rehoboam going to do? Let's go to war. We're just going to kill these people and conquer them. Right? He gets all these people to fight with him.

But it says that, God brought the Word of the Lord, in verse 22 to a man named Shemaiah. And in verse 23, *"He was told to give a message to Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, king of Judah, and to all the house of Judah and Benjamin, to the rest of the people. 24 'Thus says the LORD, You shall not go up or fight against your relatives the people of Israel. Every man return to his home, for this thing is from me.'" (And) So they listened to the word of the LORD and they went home again, according to the word of the LORD."*

God kept a civil war from breaking out that day by raising up a prophet to tell them to go home.

And *"25 Then Jeroboam built Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim and (he) lived there. And he went out from there and built Penuel. 26 And Jeroboam (now listen to this) Jeroboam said in his heart, "Now the kingdom will turn back to the house of David. 27 If this people go up to offer sacrifices in the temple of the LORD at Jerusalem, then the heart of this people will turn again to their lord,*

to Rehoboam king of Judah, and they will (just) kill me and (they'll) return to Rehoboam king of Judah."

And ²⁸ *So the king took counsel* (In other words, he asked the opinion of some of his men.) and they decided to make *two calves of gold. And he said to the people, "You have gone up to Jerusalem long enough. Behold your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt."* ²⁹ *And he set one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan. (And)* ³⁰ *Then this thing became a sin, for the people went as far as Dan to be before one."*

What's going on here? Jeroboam said to himself, you know what? In Jerusalem they've got the temple. And it's beautiful. And I can't compete with that. And every so often these people are called by the Lord to go back to Jerusalem and worship there at the temple in Jerusalem. Well, when they go there, they're going to go, man, this is where I want to live.

Well, let's just make Rehoboam King. Because then we'll have the temple in our country. And Jeroboam's thinking all this in his mind. He thinks, "And they are just going to come and kill me. And that'll be the end.

What does that tell you about Jeroboam's acceptance of the Word of God? It says, he rejected it. Right? God told him, I will establish your kingdom. God said it. I will establish your kingdom. What did Jeroboam do? He got his eyes off the Lord, and he put his eyes on things. Oh, they've got the temple. Solomon built that gorgeous temple. That gold temple with ivory and all the other beautiful... There's no way we can compete with that. He's looking at what a human level.

We're just going to create our own religion. And I'm going to keep my people from going to Jerusalem. And I'm going to build some temples here. And I'm going to build a couple of golden calves. And I'm going to tell them, "These are your gods. You don't have to go to Jerusalem. You don't have to make the trip anymore. It's right here. You can worship your gods right here."

That's what it goes on to say. Verse 31. *"He also made temples on high places and (he) appointed priests from among ...the people, who were not of the Levites. (This is all of his own making.)* ³² *And Jeroboam appointed a feast on the fifteenth day of the eighth month like the feast that was in Judah,..."*

Of course he wanted to have it going on the same time. Right? So that his people would stay for his feast and not go to the one in Jerusalem. *"and he offered sacrifices on the altar. So he did in Bethel, sacrificing to the calves that*

he made. And he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places that he had made. (And) ³³ He went up to the altar that he had made in Bethel on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, (look at this) in the month that he had devised from his own heart. And he instituted a feast for the people of Israel and went to the altar to make offerings."

Let me just say this before we close. Jeroboam creates a paganistic, man-made religion. And Israel will never recover from it, ever. They will not. And they will ultimately just be destroyed. Go into captivity because of what this man did. And it will go on for hundreds of years. All because he was afraid of losing the devotion of the people.

Boy, fear can make you do some incredible things. Fear, is a taskmaster like no other. And it will cause you and I, to even do things contrary to the Lord if we're not careful.

And this whole idea of devising a religious system based out of - what does it say - his own heart. That happens. Still happens today. There are man-made religions going on in the world right now. Some of them even worshipping in this community.

Man-made out of someone's own imagination, out of someone's own heart. Has nothing to do with biblical authority. Nothing to do with the reality of historical evidence and revelation. It is out of a man's heart. Out of his own imagination. It happened. Don't think it can't happen. Happened here. Can happen again. It has happened.